UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
1st meeting
held on
Tuesday, 15 September 1992
at 3.55 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1st MEETING

Temporary Chairman: Mr. GANEV (President of the General Assembly)

CONTENTS

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN

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Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/47/SR.1
17 September 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

92-56666 5951S (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.55 p.m.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN

1. Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand) nominated Mr. Khouini (Tunisia) for the office of Chairman.

2. In the absence of further nominations and in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure, the TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN said that he would take it, if he heard no objection, that the Committee wished to elect Mr. Khouini (Tunisia) Chairman.

3. Mr. Khouini (Tunisia) was elected Chairman by acclamation.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
2nd meeting
held on
Friday, 9 October 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KHOUINI (Tunisia)

CONTENTS

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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92-56918 6069S (E)

Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/47/SR.2
22 October 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the members of the Committee to elect two Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

2. Mr. WEOSOWICZ (Poland) nominated Mr. Fuentes Ibáñez (Bolivia) for the office of Vice-Chairman.

3. Mr. SCHAEFER (Germany) nominated Mr. Alsaidi (Yemen) for the office of Vice-Chairman.

4. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in the absence of other nominations, the Committee should not proceed to a secret vote.

5. Mr. Fuentes Ibáñez (Bolivia) and Mr. Alsaidi (Yemen) were elected Vice-Chairmen by acclamation.

6. Mr. ABDERAHMAN (Egypt) nominated Mr. Shevchenko (Ukraine) for the office of Rapporteur.

7. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in the absence of other nominations, the Committee should not proceed to a secret vote.

8. Mr. Shevchenko (Ukraine) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/SPC/47/1 and A/SPC/47/L.1)

9. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the recommendations concerning the organization and rationalization of work contained in the report of the General Committee to the General Assembly (A/47/250).

10. In connection with the recommendations of the General Committee, he pointed out that, according to the information provided by the Secretariat, during the previous session the Special Political Committee had lost almost 39 hours, in other words the equivalent of 13 meetings, as a result of the late starting or early adjournment of meetings. As for the meetings themselves, any extension of more than 30 minutes beyond the normal time of adjournment should be requested 24 hours before the meeting. If additional meetings were required, they would probably have to be held on Saturdays.

11. In accordance with the recommendation in annex V of the rules of procedure, he intended to close the list of speakers on each agenda item when one third of the meetings allocated to that item had been held. Committee members who wished to make statements must place their names on the list kept by the Secretariat and would be called upon to speak in that order. Once the

(The Chairman)

list had been closed, any changes in the order could be made only by mutual consent between two delegations which agreed to exchange places on the list. Otherwise, any representative not ready to speak when his turn came would be placed at the end of the list.

12. In accordance with the Committee's practice and the recommendation approved by the General Assembly, representatives wishing to exercise the right of reply should so inform the Secretariat, which would keep a list of replies to be heard by the Committee once all delegations on the list of speakers for a particular meeting had been heard. If the same item was discussed at two meetings held on the same day, delegations would exercise their right of reply at the end of the second meeting. The General Assembly had decided to limit to two the number of statements by any delegation in exercise of the right of reply, the first to be limited to 10 minutes and the second to 5 minutes.

13. In order to facilitate the work of the interpreters and précis-writers, speakers should provide the conference officer with 15 copies of their prepared statements and 300 copies if they were also to be distributed to delegations, specialized agencies, observers and other parties concerned.

14. The General Assembly had drawn attention to regulation 4.9 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, which stipulated: "No Council, Commission or other competent body shall take a decision involving either a change in the programme budget approved by the General Assembly or the possible requirement of expenditure unless it has received and taken account of a report from the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of the proposal." In that connection, the Assembly had noted that it was imperative that Main Committees should allow sufficient time for the preparation of the estimate of expenditures by the Secretariat and for its consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Fifth Committee. The General Assembly had imposed a deadline of 1 December for the submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions with financial implications, and a deadline of 18 November in the case of the Main Committees. The Assembly had also felt it necessary to establish a minimum period of 48 hours between the submission of and the voting on any proposal involving financial expenditure in order to allow the Secretary-General to prepare and present the related statement of administrative and financial implications. In that connection, reference was made to the observations of the Secretary-General regarding the fact that it might take a few days for the preparation and presentation of such statements, depending on the type and complexity of the proposals involving changes in the work programme and additional expenditures. In addition, ACABQ and the Fifth Committee needed adequate time to review the programme budget implications of a draft resolution before the latter was acted on by the Assembly. The Secretary-General considered it desirable that Member States should submit proposals involving statements of programme budget implications sufficiently in advance to avoid the cancellation of meetings or the postponement of consideration of items.

(The Chairman)

15. With regard to the very expensive item of documentation, the General Assembly had observed that stricter measures must be taken to limit as much as possible requests by Member States and subsidiary organs for the distribution of material as official documents of the General Assembly. Moreover, owing to financial constraints, overnight processing of documents was not always possible, a fact which should be taken into account when draft resolutions were submitted.

16. As in the past, the Special Political Committee would have summary records. The procedure for submitting corrections to those records was set out in the footnote thereto. Once again, the General Assembly had accepted the recommendation of the General Committee that the Special Political Committee should be authorized to receive, on specific request, transcripts of the debates of some of its meetings or portions thereof. Those transcripts, which were not part of the official records of the Committee, would not entail any extrabudgetary expenditure, as they would be prepared when the required services became available. In fact, they appeared after the summary records. In view of the financial crisis, he suggested that the summary records should be distributed in the language in which they had originally been prepared - namely English, French or Spanish - as soon as they were available, on the understanding that they would be issued in the other languages as soon as the translations were available.

17. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt his suggestion, which was designed to expedite its work.

18. It was so decided.

19. The CHAIRMAN invited delegations to submit to the Secretariat the names of their representatives so that a list of members of the Committee could be issued (to be issued as document A/INF/47/3).

20. He drew the attention of members of the Committee to document A/SPC/47/1, containing a letter addressed to him by the President of the General Assembly transmitting a list of the agenda items allocated to the Committee and other decisions relating to the programme of work. He also drew attention to document A/SPC/47/L.1, containing a tentative timetable for the work of the Committee. The schedule would have to be interpreted with the necessary degree of flexibility in order to coordinate the Committee's work with that of the General Assembly and other bodies. The Committee would, in particular, continue the close coordination with the Fourth Committee which, during the previous five sessions, had enabled it to avoid as far as possible the holding of concurrent meetings. Such coordination would be effected with the necessary flexibility to allow both Committees to complete their work on schedule.

21. In the preparation of the Committee's programme of work, account had been taken of the documents available and the dates envisaged for issuing the

(The Chairman)

remaining basic documents. For the consideration of item 71 (Effects of atomic radiation), the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation had been issued as document A/47/293. With regard to item 77 (Question of the composition of the relevant organs of the United Nations), no basic document had been envisaged. Under item 72 (International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space), the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space would be issued as document A/47/20, and the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had been issued as document A/47/383. Under item 73 (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) the Committee would have before it the report of the Commissioner-General (A/47/13) and the report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (A/47/413). The Secretary-General's report under General Assembly resolution 46/46 H had been issued as document A/47/438. The remainder of the documents on that item would be issued before the Committee took it up. They were: the Secretary-General's reports under General Assembly resolutions 46/46 D, E, F, G, I, J and K and the report of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA. Concerning item 74 (Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories), the Special Committee's first and second periodic reports pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/47 A had been issued as documents A/47/76 and A/47/262 respectively. The third periodic report would be issued in due course. It was hoped that the Secretary-General's reports under General Assembly resolutions 46/47 B, C, D, E, F and G would be issued before the Committee took up the item. As to item 76 (Questions relating to information), the report of the Committee on Information had been issued as document A/47/21. The Secretary-General's report pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/73 B (A/47/462) would be issued before the Committee took up the item. With regard to item 75 (Comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects), the report of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations had already been issued as document A/47/253. The special report of that Committee was contained in document A/47/386.

Adoption of the proposed timetable

22. The CHAIRMAN said that, in the preparation of the proposed timetable (A/SPC/47/L.1), account had been taken of the availability of documents, the consideration of related items in other bodies and the number of meetings devoted to those items at previous sessions.

23. Mr. BATAINEH (Jordan), supported by Mr. AL-SUWAIDI (United Arab Emirates) and Mr. JELBAN (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), said his delegation considered that discussion of items 73, on UNRWA, and 74, on the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, should be strictly limited so that delegations could speak specifically on Israeli

(Mr. Bataineh, Jordan)

practices. However, the chronic problem of delay in issuing the most recent report on Israeli practices would prevent delegations from considering item 74 adequately. The item should therefore be deferred until the Committee had before it all the necessary information. He suggested that item 74 should be interchanged with item 75 or, if that was not possible, it should be deferred until the end of the programme of work.

24. The CHAIRMAN suggested that in the light of the views expressed, the Committee should postpone until the next meeting its decision on the programme of work. In the meantime, he would consult with the other members of the Bureau in order to submit revised proposals. He suggested also that the Committee should take a final decision at its next meeting concerning the postponement of certain items, following consultations with the Secretariat and the representatives of the organizations that were due to appear before the Committee. He took it that the Committee agreed with his suggestion.

25. It was so decided.

Hearings on apartheid

26. Mrs. PILOTO (Zimbabwe), referring to item 33 (Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa), requested a clarification concerning arrangements for the statements on that item to be made in the Committee by individuals and organizations.

27. The CHAIRMAN said that the Assembly had decided to consider that item directly in plenary meeting and that organizations and individuals having a special interest in the question would be permitted to be heard by the Special Political Committee. He announced that the Committee would devote two meetings on 6 November to those hearings and suggested that the organizations and individuals wishing to be heard by the Committee should submit their requests in writing to the Chairman of the Committee by Thursday, 22 October at the latest. The communications in which hearings were requested would be distributed as Committee documents and would be considered at a subsequent meeting, before the hearings were held. The Secretariat would inform the organizations and individuals that were granted a hearing of the date on which the relevant meeting would be held. He took it that the Committee agreed with that procedure.

28. It was so decided.

Working Group on questions relating to information

29. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, with a view to expediting its work, the Committee should, as in previous years, establish an open-ended working group, presided over by one of the two Vice-Chairmen of the Committee, to prepare the

(The Chairman)

draft resolution on item 76 (Questions relating to information). He took it that the Committee agreed.

30. It was so decided.

Working Group on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

31. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, as in previous years, the Committee should establish an open-ended working group, presided over by the representative of Austria, to prepare the draft resolution on item 72 (International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space). He took it that the Committee agreed.

32. It was so decided.

33. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee was scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, 20 October 1992 at 10 a.m., when it would decide on the timetable and would take up items 70 (Science and peace) and 71 (Effects of atomic radiation). He requested that delegations which were preparing draft resolutions on those items should submit them to the Secretariat before that date and that members wishing to speak on those items should include their names in the list of speakers, which would be closed at the end of the next meeting.

The meeting rose at noon.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
3rd meeting
held on
Tuesday, 20 October 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KHOUINI (Tunisia)

CONTENTS

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

AGENDA ITEM 70: SCIENCE AND PEACE

AGENDA ITEM 71: EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION

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Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/47/SR.3
22 October 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

92-57090 6076S (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/SPC/47/L.1/Rev.1)

1. The CHAIRMAN introduced a slightly revised timetable for the work of the Special Polital Committee (A/SPC/47/L.1/Rev.1) and said that he would take it that the Committee approved the new timetable.

2. It was so decided.

3. The CHAIRMAN noted that programmes 1, 2, 4 to 6, 8, 35, 36 and 38 of the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan 1992-1997 (agenda item 105 (Programme Planning)) had been allocated for its review to the Special Political Committee, which had been requested to transmit its views and recommendations to the Fifth Committee before 20 November 1992. Accordingly, members wishing to express their views and recommendations on those programmes should communicate them to the Chairman in writing by Tuesday, 17 November 1992. He would take it that that procedure was acceptable to the Committee.

4. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 70: SCIENCE AND PEACE (A/SPC/47/L.2)

5. Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) noted that it had been her delegation that had proposed the inclusion of item 70, "Science and peace", in the agenda of the General Assembly at its forty-third session in 1988. The Assembly had decided during that session that the week of 11 November each year would be an International Week of Science and Peace aimed at providing an incentive for the search for suitable and viable ways of solving the pressing problems of humanity, principally those caused by war, violence and natural disaster. Costa Rica also urged Member States to eliminate from their work programmes the development of implements of war of every kind and of the means of massive destruction of human beings and the ecology.

6. The Assembly had again considered the item "Science and peace" at its forty-fifth session in 1990 and had adopted resolution 45/60, which called for its further consideration at the forty-seventh regular session. However, her delegation would prefer that consideration to be postponed until the forty-eighth session to comply with the Secretary-General's guidelines on rationalization of work, since the science and peace item could be combined with the item entitled "Education and information for disarmament", which, under resolution 46/27, was to be considered anew at the forty-eighth session of the Assembly.

7. In addition, a greater number of pertinent reports would be available following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the subsequent adoption of Agenda 21.

(Mrs. Castro de Barish, Costa Rica)

8. Accordingly, her delegation had prepared draft decision A/SPC/47/L.2, sponsored by El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, requesting the General Assembly to postpone consideration of the item until its forty-eighth regular session in 1993.

9. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt draft decision A/SPC/47/L.2.

10. Draft decision A/SPC/47/L.2 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 71: EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION (A/47/293; A/SPC/47/L.3)

11. The CHAIRMAN noted that Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, India, Italy and Jordan had become sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/47/L.3.

12. Mr. MALONE (Canada) introduced the draft resolution contained in document A/SPC/47/L.3.

13. Canada continued strongly to support the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) and endorsed its plans for future activities connected with the review of radiation doses and the effects of radiation on human populations and the environment. UNSCEAR had become the most authoritative voice on the subject of radiation health and the basic reference for regulation making throughout the world.

14. However, the reality and perception of its authority and independence must be maintained. Therefore, Canada believed that any review of arrangements for the UNSCEAR secretariat under resolution A/RES/46/185C must take into account the need to preserve UNSCEAR as a body independent of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

15. Mr. KRASULIN (Russian Federation) said that the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (A/47/293) demonstrated that the Committee continued to carry out important and useful work and deserved to be commended by the international community. The Scientific Committee had the experience and the expertise to contribute to the prevention and elimination of sites contaminated by atomic radiation. In that connection, he drew attention to the work of the Scientific Committee in studying the effects of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. That Committee's work took on even more significance now, as the Chernobyl problem remained very serious. He thanked the international community for its support during the Chernobyl tragedy, and said that the Russian Federation deeply appreciated the efforts of the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system in resolving problems relating to the after-effects of the disaster.

16. The data which had emerged from the Scientific Committee's work on various problems relating to atomic radiation had contributed to a greater awareness of the dangers of environmental pollution caused by atomic radiation

(Mr. Krasulin, Russian Federation)

and the need to prevent it, specifically by halting nuclear weapons testing. The Russian Federation had declared its willingness to move towards significant limitation of nuclear testing and even its complete elimination. The Russian Federation believed that the process of elaborating an international agreement on banning nuclear testing should be initiated and called upon the Conference on Disarmament to bring more energy to the test-ban question. As a concrete expression of its position, in October of 1991 the Russian Federation had declared a one-year moratorium on nuclear testing, which the President of the Russian Federation had extended by decree until 1 July 1993.

17. The Russian Federation was gratified by France's decision to suspend its own nuclear tests until the end of 1992 and recalled the appeal made by the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation in April 1992 to other nuclear Powers to follow the example of the Russian Federation and France and cease their testing.

18. He was also gratified by the recent decision of the United States regarding nuclear testing and said it showed that efforts in that area were taking a constructive turn. Given the currently favourable climate, it was important for the international community to redouble its efforts to move towards a ban on nuclear testing, and to strive to identify mutually acceptable, yet effective and practical solutions to outstanding problems.

19. The Russian Federation was convinced that the time had come for deeper involvement of United Nations institutions in issues of environmental protection and preservation and peaceful exploitation of scientific and technological advances for the betterment of all States and in the elaboration of comprehensive treaties on the reduction and banning of nuclear testing. The Scientific Committee should also make a contribution towards fulfilling those objectives.

20. Mr. NEJEDLY (Czech and Slovak Federal Republic) said that, owing to continuous progress in the limitation of nuclear arms tests, it had become possible to turn to the study of the impact of radiation from natural and civilian sources on human beings and their environment. The solution of such problems had become highly topical, especially since the Chernobyl disaster of April 1986.

21. The Czech and Slovak Federal Republic had been involved in the work of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation from its inception in 1955 and had lately been cooperating with UNSCEAR in collecting scientific information concerning professional and therapeutic exposure and emission of radionuclides from Czechoslovak nuclear power plants. Most recently, it had been gathering data on exposure from natural sources, especially radon. All of those activities would help in the preparation of a thorough report on the effects of ionizing radiation from natural and artificial sources being prepared by UNSCEAR for the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

(Mr. Nejedly, Czech and Slovak Federal Republic)

22. His delegation welcomed the results of the forty-first session of UNSCEAR, held at Vienna from 15 to 19 June 1992. A number of physical and biomedical reports had been discussed concerning radiation exposure from natural and artificial (including therapeutic) sources. The results would significantly enrich knowledge in the field of diagnosis, risk assessment and prevention.

23. With regard to the merger of the secretariats of UNSCEAR and IAEA, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic was rather pessimistic. The tasks of UNSCEAR under its mandate were completely different from those of the International Atomic Energy Agency and its scientific independence and authority might be threatened under such a merger. Czechoslovakia therefore recommended that the current arrangement be maintained, with the financial and administrative concerns of UNSCEAR being handled through the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Naturally, close cooperation between UNSCEAR, IAEA and other organizations of the United Nations system remained necessary.

24. Mr. YELCHENKO (Ukraine) said that Ukraine had noted with satisfaction that the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (A/47/293) had given considerable attention to the effects of atomic radiation on the human body. Close cooperation among UNSCEAR and other international organizations of the United Nations system, including IAEA, UNEP and the World Health Organization (WHO) had contributed to a broader and more profound understanding of the invisible danger to the human body of atomic radiation. Ukraine hoped that similar cooperation on the problem would continue in the future.

25. Progress made in disarmament since the forty-sixth General Assembly had given Ukraine reason for hope that the substantive measures of States and the international community for nuclear disarmament would finally make it possible to eliminate the most powerful potential source of lethal radiation - nuclear weapons. In that connection, Ukraine had declared its firm intention to rid itself of all the nuclear weaponry inherited from the former USSR and would do its utmost to destroy the nuclear arsenals located on its territory, in an effort to make Ukraine an example for other States. Likewise, Ukraine supported the international campaign for a complete moratorium on nuclear testing and planned to sign the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the near future. Ukraine was ready to put all its nuclear power plants and all their accompanying equipment and materials under the control of IAEA.

26. Other sources of radiation were also of great concern to Ukraine. The Ukrainian people had had first-hand experience with the danger posed by improper use of nuclear energy as a result of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in 1986; and the number of injured as a result of that event reached into the millions. Moreoever, the number of injured continued to mount as a result of the natural migration of radioactive particulate matter from the site of the accident. The large-scale nature of the disaster

(Mr. Yelchenko, Ukraine)

was confirmed in studies by Ukrainian and foreign scientists which were carried out in the area immediately affected by atomic radiation. According to estimates from the Institute of Atomic Sciences of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences the amount of radioactive material in plutonium alone released from the damaged reactor of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant was about 360 kilogrammes - an amount sufficient to kill 7 billion people in two weeks, assuming contact with the human body occurred.

27. According to official data, 50 million curies of radionuclides had been released into the environment as a result of the accident. Radioactive contamination of greater than 1 curie/km had been experienced in approximately half of the territory of Ukraine, in a significant part of the territory of Belarus and in other States. The natural environment had become not only a "magnet" for the radionuclides in the form of airborne and water-borne discharges from the Chernobyl power plant, but also a long-term source of secondary contamination through food products, air and underground water deposits.

28. More than 5 million people suffered from the after-effects of high levels of radiation in Ukraine, of which 1 million were children. In the period 1986 to 1990, the number of cases of gastro-intestinal disease had increased two times over 1981-1985 levels; diseases of the blood had increased three times; and thyroid disease and immune system impairment had increased more than four times. Similar data had been collected concerning impairment to the functioning of adult reproductive systems, suggesting a danger for the integrity of the very genetic inheritance of the Ukrainian people. Scientists had predicted that in the future the health of over 35 million people could be affected as a result of the Chernobyl catastrophe.

29. Ukraine was taking all necessary steps to identify and examine the effects of the Chernobyl catastrophe. Research proposals were being made, and methods for containing the damaged reactor and to localize radioactive sites in the affected zone were being studied.

30. Despite the difficult economic situation of Ukraine, the Government was devoting considerable resources to assistance programmes for the victims of radiation. In that connection, Ukraine deeply appreciated the efforts extended on its behalf from abroad, and would like to express its gratitude to the countries organizations, families and private individuals, who had taken in children and arranged for their medical care following the accident. Ukraine was also grateful to the Government of Italy for having provided aircraft to fly injured children to Italy for a vacation and to the Government of Cuba, which had taken in children in large numbers. Lastly, Ukraine expressed its gratitude to the Governments and organizations of the United States, Canada, Israel, Holland, Poland, Bulgaria, Malta and other countries for their compassionate efforts on behalf of children injured as a result of the Chernobyl accident.

(Mr. Yelchenko, Ukraine)

31. While Ukraine noted with satisfaction the contribution of the international community on the question of mitigating the after-effects of the Chernobyl catastrophe, there were many questions whose complexity and multifaceted nature required greater attention from the United Nations and its specialized agencies. The establishment in April 1992 of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Chernobyl would help to ensure coordination of United Nations activities. A special seminar organized by WHO on the coordination of Chernobyl activities would be held in Kiev in November of 1992.

32. Mr. GEORGE (Federated States of Micronesia), speaking on behalf of the nine nations of the South Pacific Forum that were also Members of the United Nations, namely, Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, commended the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation for its in-depth studies, and called upon all Member States to cooperate with that Committee. He hoped that it would possible for the Committee to present its comprehensive report to the General Assembly in 1993. The nations of the South Pacific Forum had devoted much energy to counteracting the threat of human-induced global warming and its adverse consequences, which included climate change and sea-level rise. The threat of devastation of the region's environment at the hands of people other than its inhabitants had been one of the most serious and ever-present dangers to the region for the past three decades.

33. The decision by France to suspend the programme of nuclear-weapons testing in the Tuamotu Archipelago to the east of the Cook Islands was certainly a positive development. The members of the South Pacific Forum commended France for its courage in unilaterally suspending the programme, and called on other nuclear Powers to follow suit. At their recent summit meeting in the Solomon Islands, the Forum Heads of State had warmly welcomed the decision, and had observed in their communiqué (A/47/391) that indefinite extension of the French cessation of nuclear tests would contribute significantly to improving further the relations between France and the countries of the Pacific. They had added, however, that any resumption of nuclear testing would clearly disappoint Forum members and set back the current positive trend in improved relations between France and the Forum. The South Pacific Forum countries anticipated the day when their hopes would find expression in a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty establishing a secure legal regime that would protect all countries unconditionally.

34. Speaking on behalf of his own country and of Papua New Guinea, he said that the almost unending nuclear radiation that emanated from the material used in warheads represented a lasting danger after the weapons themselves had been dismantled. Even though the international community might no longer fear destruction by nuclear holocaust, the quantities of nuclear material left over from the arms race must be controlled, stored or otherwise disposed of. To compound the problem, radioactive wastes were quickly building up from peaceful applications of nuclear technology. The disposition of those wastes,

(Mr. George, Federated States of Micronesia)

whether by disposal, storage or reprocessing, raised a whole new set of complex dangers. His Government had recently become aware of plans by the Japanese Government to embark during 1992 on a 30-year programme of surface shipments of refined plutonium from Europe to Japan for utilization in Japan's breeder reactor programme. The situation had been discussed at the meeting of the South Pacific Forum in July 1992, and the Forum leaders had expressed their concern in the communiqué contained in document A/47/391, stating specifically that the shipments must be made in accordance with the highest international safety and security standards and in a manner which satisfactorily addressed all possible contingencies. The Forum had gone on to urge that Japan should consult fully with its member countries regarding the proposed shipments. Thus far, those consultations had been limited to general assurances by Japan.

35. One of the benefits to be derived from the work of UNSCEAR, either under its current mandate or, if necessary, under a new mandate, was assistance in defining the nature and scope of the threat posed to humanity by nuclear wastes. Most of the Pacific Island countries lacked the requisite scientific expertise to react with assurance when they became aware of planned movements of deadly quantities of toxic materials through their region. It seemed that after all the tragic misadventures that had left some regions with generations of radiation victims, the industrial nations still were not placing sufficient priority upon the avoidance of further suffering. If the Scientific Committee could lend its considerable expertise to examining the dangerous potential of shipments such as the planned plutonium shipments, it would be possible to consider more carefully the implications now and in the future for all concerned.

36. He wished to make it clear that his Government did not attribute the planned shipments of plutonium to any wilful disregard, because the nations involved were some of its staunchest friends and supporters. It was time, however, to place the problem of the movement and disposition of deadly nuclear materials through the global commons in the context of an effective global solution arrived at with universal participation. The potential consequences of an accident in the course of any movement of nuclear materials could be so widespread and so devastating that whether it occurred within or without sovereign territory became irrelevant. Yet the seeming ineffectiveness of protests raised by so many countries against the circumstances surrounding the plutonium shipments suggested strongly that existing international arrangements were not adequate to protect the international community. Unilateral efforts at self-protection regulating entry and transit were also inadequate. His delegation looked forward to the comprehensive report of the Scientific Committee, and called upon that Committee to go further into an assessment of the radiation effects connected with all aspects of nuclear wastes, including reprocessing.

37. Mr. PLUMBLY (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that there was a compelling need to

(Mr. Plumbly, United Kingdom)

address fully public concerns, and to correct misconceptions about radiation, its effects on human and animal life and on the environment. It was important to educate those who formed opinions based on fear, a lack of understanding, or a lack of knowledge. All those involved with radiation had a duty to give the public the necessary information to enable them to make a rational assessment of the facts. Unfortunately, the long dark shadow of Chernobyl still hung over the international community, which must work together to ensure that such accidents did not happen again. With the best available technology, the probability of a serious accident could be very low, but it was important not to be complacent.

38. The European Community and its 12 member States were convinced of the importance of effective cooperation to improve the safety of nuclear installations, with the aim of making accidents a remote possibility. The Community and its member States had contributed to numerous projects designed to alleviate the effects of the Chernobyl accident. The European Community would also be contributing to nuclear safety generally through its programmes of technical assistance for Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and had recently negotiated with the authorities concerned an agreement on the consequences of the Chernobyl accident. With institutes in the Russian Federation, Belarus and Ukraine, the Commission would be carrying out an extensive programme to study the nature of radioactive contamination resulting from the accident, to broaden the technical skills needed to avoid and control such accidents in the future and to improve emergency management procedures.

39. The European Community and its 12 Member States welcomed the results achieved by UNSCEAR and the fruitful cooperation it had entered into with other international bodies. They wished to express their appreciation by supporting the resolution to renew the mandate of the Scientific Committee.

40. Ms. ADAMSON (Australia) said that her country, which had been a member of UNSCEAR since its inception in 1955 and continued to value its work highly, was pleased to co-sponsor the resolution contained in document A/SPC/47/L.3. In its 37 years of operation, UNSCEAR had efficiently disseminated data on levels of ionizing radiation and radioactivity in the environment and on the related risks to individuals and future generations. In addition to periodically publishing an authoritative, independent and widely recognized review of the sources and biological consequences for humans of ionizing radiation, it provided a scientific environment for evaluating new information and developing new concepts. It would be unfortunate if the independence of UNSCEAR were perceived to be diminished as a result of any change in its administrative arrangements.

41. The work of UNSCEAR should not be seen in scientific isolation, but was of practical relevance in a world where nuclear weapons abounded and nuclear testing still continued. The Australian Government remained firmly committed to the objective of complete nuclear disarmament under effective international control and had consistently called on all States to negotiate a comprehensive

(Ms. Adamson, Australia)

test-ban treaty. The Australian Government warmly welcomed the moratorium on nuclear testing in the Pacific decided by the French Government and the suspension of the United States nuclear-testing programme. It urged all testing States to implement an indefinite moratorium on testing and looked forward to the start of negotiations on a treaty within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament that would codify a total, permanent ban on such testing.

42. The Treaty of Raratonga, establishing a large area of the South Pacific as a nuclear-free-zone, had come into effect in December 1986 in response to the concerns of South Pacific countries about the nuclear-arms race, nuclear testing and the dumping and storage of nuclear waste in the South Pacific. The Australian Government had welcomed the ratification of the Treaty's three protocols by the former Soviet Union and China, but was disappointed that the other three nuclear-weapons States, the United States, the United Kingdom and France, had not yet signed or ratified them. It reiterated the appeal made to those countries in July by members of the South Pacific Forum to accede to the protocols as soon as possible.

43. Mr. SEARLE (Chile) said that during the past year, significant steps had been taken in the area of disarmament which would help reduce the effects of atomic radiation. The reduction of strategic weapons agreed on by the Presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation and the moratoriums on nuclear tests announced by France and the United States were encouraging developments in that regard. The matter of health and the environment had also been dealt with at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in June 1991.

44. His delegation noted with concern, however, that many countries still were not aware of the interdependence between health, the environment and development. In addition, there was still controversy regarding the after-effects of nuclear tests, both under water and in the atmosphere.

45. His delegation welcomed the announcement by France of its decision to suspend for one year its nuclear tests in the South Pacific. It was to be hoped, however, that the French Government would decide to suspend such tests permanently.

46. His Government fully endorsed General Assembly resolutions 45/49, on cessation of all nuclear-test explosions, and 45/51, on the urgent need for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Moreoever, it was essential to amend the Treaty Banning Nuclear-Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, inasmuch as it did not include underground testing. What was needed was a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, i.e., one that would also ban underground tests. His delegation supported the inclusion of the item in the agenda of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

(Mr. Searle, Chile)

47. He wished to draw attention to the important role played by his country, along with Argentina and Brazil, following the entry into force of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. With regard to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, he stressed that Chile had formally stated that it did not manufacture, store or export such weapons. Likewise, it had agreed with Argentina and Brazil on a total prohibition of chemical and biological weapons, to which other countries of the region had also adhered. Chile and Panama were the only countries in the world to have prohibited the dumping of nuclear, radioactive and toxic wastes in the 200-mile exclusive economic zone.

48. At the Rio Summit, his Government had proposed the inclusion in Agenda 21 of a proposal on the drafting of a worldwide convention on nuclear security. At the recent Assembly of IAEA, Chile had proposed the adoption of a resolution aimed at improving procedures relating to the notification of nuclear accidents. The Chernobyl experience had highlighted the importance of prompt notification of accidents, and of mutual assistance and cooperation, as well as the need to strengthen an international regime of liability for damage caused by atomic radiation. Rapid notification should also be required in the case of accidents at sea.

49. He wished to express his delegation's concern regarding the transport of a shipment of radioactive plutonium from France to Japan. On behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, as well as his own, he wished to draw attention to the potential threat of a nuclear catastrophe in the Pacific. The plan to transport a large amount of plutonium to Japan highlighted the need for elaborating an international and legally binding instrument to deal with such cases.

50. Mr. CHANG Vhong (China) said that the Chinese delegation noted with satisfaction all the work of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, such as the review of atomic radiation doses and effects, the technical discussion of exposure and its effects and the preparation of a report for the current session of the General Assembly. It was also glad to note that a series of important topics had been selected for further study and that a comprehensive report on radiation sources, exposure and effects on biological subjects was to be prepared for the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. In addition to its useful work in collecting, processing and disseminating information on atomic radiation and ionizing radiation, UNSCEAR produced reports which, owing to their objectivity, were highly authoritative.

51. The Chinese Government would, as always, render every possible assistance to UNSCEAR, which was shouldering heavy responsibilities, inasmuch as atomic radiation was closely related to the extremely important areas of environment and development and human health. The Chinese delegation gave full support to draft resolution A/SPC/47/L.3, being one of its sponsors.

52. Mr. ZAWELS (Argentina) said that the annual report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation provided a glimpse of the intensive work carried on by that Committee and the considerable range of topics selected by it for study. Its efforts to gather data on exposure to radiation throughout the world were laudable. His country wished to stress the importance of the relationship between effects of atomic radiation, especially its effect on human beings, and environmental studies and supported the continued investigation of that relationship by UNSCEAR. It also shared the hope expressed by UNSCEAR that Member States, the specialized agencies and IAEA would continue to collaborate with the Scientific Committee.

53. The objective of the nuclear programme of Argentina, which was committed to the peaceful use of atomic energy, was social and economic development. Argentina had recently signed a bilateral agreement concerning nuclear safeguards with Brazil, established a bilateral agency for nuclear materials control and accountancy, signed an agreement on total safeguards with IAEA and, together with Chile, promoted the amendment of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, in order to enable it to be fully in force. The Argentine National Atomic Energy Commission was currently carrying out programmes relating to the peaceful use of atomic energy and to the safety and protection of the population, workers in the nuclear industry and the environment. Argentina thus had a special interest in UNSCEAR, in which it had participated since its inception and to which its National Atomic Energy Commission provided abundant information.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.